

K-627

Circa 1885

Golts Methodist Episcopal Church

Golts

Private

The now-vacant Golts Methodist Church is one of the simplest and plainest late-nineteenth-century churches in rural Kent County. To call it even vernacular Victorian Gothic Revival is to stretch the term, but it is derivative of that style. Unlike most county frame churches of the period, it has no attached tower with belfry and vestibule; entry is directly into the nave through the canopied central bay of the gable-end facing Bradford Johnson Road. The now-gone one-storey church hall that stood adjacent is said to have had a belfry and a bell, however. Three bays wide and three deep, the church has tall, unarched double-hung windows with 4-over-4 colored lights, some now broken. The only real decorations on the exterior are the simple king-post trussed-bargeboards, the tiny semi-circular window in the gable facing the road, the structural members of the entry canopy, and the roof's corner drops. The Golts Methodist Church is one of the two surviving public-use buildings of the village of Golts, which grew and thrived because of its railroad station and five-road intersection. Along with the Golts Public School (K-614), the church served as a focus for community activities. When the village declined because of changes in transportation, agriculture, and the important local logging business, the church declined as well. The church was closed for Methodist services just before World War II, though it was reopened later as the independent Gospel Church by one of the community's residents.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Golts Methodist Episcopal Church

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number Southeast corner at intersection of Black Bottom Road and Bradford Johnson Road. ☐ not for publication

city, town Golts ☒ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_

state Maryland county Kent

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: storage/ vacant

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Trustees, Methodist Episcopal Church, Golts  
c/o Peninsula Conference, United Methodist Church

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone no.: \_\_\_\_\_

city, town Dover state and zip code Delaware

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber SB. 5

street & number Cross Street folio 615

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys None

title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Survey No. K-627

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☐ good  
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The now-unused Golts Methodist Church is one of the simplest and plainest late-nineteenth-century churches in rural Kent County. To call it even vernacular Victorian Gothic Revival is to stretch the term, but it is derivative of that style. Built circa 1885 just southeast of the intersection of Black Bottom Road and Bradford Johnson Road, in the village of Golts, it is frame with a gable roof; its tall, one-storey walls are covered with horizontal, lapped weatherboarding. It rests on elongated brick piers. There is no separate tower with belfry and vestibule; entry is directly into the nave through the canopied central bay of the gable end that faces Bradford Johnson Road; there is a tall double-hung window with 4-over-4 colored lights on each side of the entry. The long sides have three evenly-spaced bays with the same windows. The rear gable end has a lower, small, shed-roofed chancel projection with a narrow window on each side. In each gable is a simple, truss-like bargeboard.

The 3-bay wide and 3-bay deep main, nave section measures about 26 feet wide by 40 feet deep. The horizontal, lapped weatherboard has an exposure of ca. 6-1/2" to 7". There are single 4" corner boards on the gable ends. The side walls are estimated to be about 15 feet high, the gable at the apex about 28 feet high. The chancel projection on the southwest, rear end measures about 8 feet wide by 2'9" deep. It is finished similarly.

Built over a shallow crawl space, the church rests on elongated brick piers except for the west corner of the chancel projection, where there are concrete blocks.

On each side, just to the rear of the central bay, there is a square chimney of parged brick within the walls, for use with stoves. They both have a one-course parged cap. The northwest chimney is topped with a clay chimney pot while the southeast chimney has a protruding metal stovepipe with hood.

The roofs are covered with interlocking black asphalt shingles laid over wood shingles. The chancel shingles are quite deteriorated.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. K-627

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates circa 1884-1885

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Golts Methodist Church is one of the two surviving public-use buildings of the village of Golts, which grew and thrived because of its railroad station and five-road intersection. Along with the school, the church and its now-gone church hall served as a focus for community activities. The building is a rare example of an extremely simple late-nineteenth-century vernacular frame church. Unlike most other county frame churches of the period, which were three-part, the Golts church did not have a vestibule-tower with belfry, and its decorative features are few and simple.

A typescript anecdotal history of old Kent County Schools, available at Cliffs School in Quaker Neck, suggests that there was a Golts-area building used for religious purposes more than ten years before the Methodist church was built. It says that a deed dated July 1, 1971, from Edwin S. Morris et al to the Board of School Commissioners of Kent County sold for \$100 a "lot of land" and "unfinished building thereon as a place for a Public Free School and for religious worship on the Holy Sabbath. The said Board of School Commissioners agree to expend the sum of \$125 to complete the building, and to allow the use and occupancy of said building and grounds, for the purpose of religious worship and Sabbath School instruction on the Sabbath Day." No deed reference was given, and the bounds of this lot were not checked for this report. On the relevant map of the 1877 atlas of Kent County, School No. 9 of District 1 is shown in approximately the location of the surviving school, built around 1900, to which the 1883 school property deed presumably applies. It should be noted that the seller of the school property in 1883 was the same Henry Archer noted below, from whose tract (one transaction earlier) the church property also came and that the tract was occupied by an E.S. Morris. These discrepancies have not yet been resolved, and the location of the early church/school determined. E.S. Morris is also shown on the 1877 maps as the owner of two properties considerably to the northwest of where Golts subsequently developed and where the surviving church and school are located.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-627

E.C. Hallman, The Garden of Methodism. Published for the Peninsula Conference of the Methodist Church, cs. 1948. (no place)  
An Illustrated Atlas of Kent and Queen Anne Counties, Md. Philadelphia: Lake, Griffing and Stevenson, 1877.  
John C. Hayman. Rails Along the Chesapeake. Salisbury, Md.: Marvadel Press, 1979.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Margaret Q. Fallaw, Survey Consultant		
organization	The County Commissioners of Kent County		
	The Historical Society of Kent	Code	May 21, 1986
street & number	Court House		778-4600
	Church Alley	telephone	778-3499
city or town	Chestertown	state	Maryland 21620

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

The nave roof overhangs the sides and ends about 20". The rafters are closed along their lower edges. On sides and ends there is a fascia crown moulding of a large cyma recta with fillets, a profile commonly seen on late-nineteenth-century frame churches in Kent County. The bed moulding is the same profile, but smaller. On each end there is a truss-like, simple bargeboard. It consists of a central vertical 3" x 4" piece with stopped-chamfer edges and a pyramidal lower end that is dropped below the single cross piece. The cross piece is of the same dimension-lumber and finished with stopped-chamfer edges. Its upper end, which appears to pierce the roof ridge (or perhaps it is a separate piece), is a pointed spire, or finial about 12" high. The superstitious in the area see the trussed bargeboard as an upside down cross and somehow satanic. At each corner of the roof overhang there is a short drop-block about 8-10" high and 3-1/2" x 4" or 5" with stop-chamfered edges and lower end pyramidal.

The chancel projection has flush, plain, tapered verge boards on its ends; this roof overhangs about 8-9" at the rear and has a small, plain cornice.

The only entry, in the northeast gable end, has a concrete stoop with a concrete step on three sides of it, presumably a replacement for original wooden steps. Incised in the concrete are the words "Gospel Church-1949," evidently placed there by Mrs. Augustus Davis, who conducted her own services in the church after Methodist services ceased. There is no walkway to the road nearby. The doors are double and narrow; the opening is 48" wide. Only one wooden screen door remains. Under the white paint peeling from the door is what appears to be the original paint, a Spanish brown. Each door has two vertical panels that are recessed and slightly raised. They have modified ogee-and-bevel applied panel moulding. Each panel is enriched with two vertical sections, each 1-1/2" wide, of reeding. The inside edges of the stiles and rails have stop-chamfers. There is a cast brass door knob and two large painted keyhole escutcheons. These doors were undoubtedly ordered from a millwork supply house. A two-light transom with colored glass (appearing to be blue and yellow and wavy) is above the doors, with a plain narrow transom bar between them. There is no applied architrave trim. The 1-1/4" jambs are exposed and beaded on the inside. There is a drip over a similar lintel.

Over the entry there is a shed-roofed canopy, supported by a triangulated wall bracket on each side. The structural pieces are all exposed. The edge beam, bracket legs, and triangulating brace piece all have stopped-chamfer edges and pyramidal ends. Four spaced, large (7/8") drill holes have been cut in the lower beam surface. There are two similar holes on each bracket leg face. The same drill bit also was used to cut recessed quatrafoils in each bracket leg below the joint with the triangulating brace. The roof decking is of 4" tongue-and-groove boards. There is a perimeter cyma-with-fillets crown moulding. The canopy is covered with asphalt shingles over wood shingles. An electric-light fixture with metal shade and open bulb beneath extends from the weatherboard on an arm ca. 15" to the west of the canopy.

Some of the main-section windows have been boarded up because of vandalism. They are tall and double-hung with 4-over-4 lights, with the  
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exception of the approach gable window. There are double wood sills, and the architraves are as at the entry. Each light seems to have been of colored glass that is wavy on the exterior and stippled on the interior, with the colors random. Colors seen were red, blue, amber, green and yellow. There are several replacement lights of clear glass; about ten of the original lights are said to have been broken. There never were shutters on the windows.

The narrow windows of the chancel projection have been boarded. The architraves measure 14" wide by 67" tall and are covered. Most likely there are 1-over-1 double-hung windows in these openings.

Centered in the approach gable there is a tiny semi-circular window with four radiating lights that is out of scale with the size of the building and the gable. It appears to be about 16" high at the center and 26" wide. Directly below, at its lower edge, is a plain recessed panel with composite panel moulding. It may originally have been a sign board, for the church's name and/or construction date. It is now plain white.

The church's body and trim are painted white; the roofs are black.

The interior of the church was not seen. Austin Davis, who has the key and who states that he owns the property (though this is not supported by the county land records in the court house), denied permission to survey the interior. He said that there is no gallery and that the main section is entirely open; there is no vestibule within it. Walls and ceiling are painted plaster. Trim is said to be about 4" wide, stained dark, and with grooves or reeding. At the chancel end of the church there are two platforms, with the pulpit on the higher one; an altar rail is in place.

To the southeast with its gable end also facing Bradford Johnson Road a frame one-storey church hall once stood. This building was also known as the town hall. It was said to have been built later than the church and of poorer construction though larger; a large fieldstone that supported the northeast corner is still in place. There was a belfry with bell over the entry; the bell is now in the possession of Austin Davis.

There never was a cemetery at this church. Parishioners were buried at Sassafras in Kent County or Townsend or Dulaney's in Delaware.

Thirteen years after the early school deed, with Golts developing as a community, area Methodists evidently felt the need for their own church building. On July 25, 1884, Daniel H. Kent and his wife, Mary E. Kent, of Wilmington, Delaware, for \$100 sold to a group of trustees the approximately one-acre church lot in "Goltz [sic] Station." The trustees were Samuel Watts, James D. Davis, Edwin S. Morris, Charles K. Morris, George Peverly, William H. Davis, and Luff Spry, presumably all residents of the Golts vicinity. The deed was recorded the next day, and very likely construction of the building began soon thereafter. (Kent Co. Land Records SB 5/615)

In his book on Delmarva Methodism, E. C. Hallman states that the deed was recorded in 1885 and the church built the same year. The former is incorrect, but the date of construction may be accurate. Hallman also says "The last reference we can find to the church was the statement in the Minutes of 1887, 'that they were out of debt.'" (p. 316) However, besides listing the church in his county catalogue of churches under the name of Golt's Methodist Episcopal Church, he also lists it as Morris Methodist Episcopal Church and locates it on the Sassafras River, which is incorrect. Morris was an earlier name of the Golts community, after the Morris family living in the area. He does not offer any information of substance about this church, saying only "It gave \$4.00 to Missions in 1893." (p. 317)

The deed's survey description, with rather unconventional and vague courses, contains references to the "School House Lot." The present church is indeed located near the surviving Golts Public School (K-614), but that building is not the one that would have been present in 1884, though the lot may be the same. Despite the inadequacies of the survey description, the lot sold to the trustees in 1884 does appear to be the location of the surviving church.

The church deed contains snips of interesting information about the community of Golts itself. Daniel Kent and his wife evidently intended to be the "developers" of a town of Golts, although a small community had already grown up, boosted by the coming of the Townsend branch of the railroad from the Delaware main line. The deed says that the church lot is "in a Town recently laid out by the said Kent, to be known as Golts." The Kents' plans were evidently of rather recent origin, for only a little more than a year earlier the Kents had bought the 100+ acre tract from which the church lot later came, from Henry W. Archer and his wife, Mary E. Archer, of Harford County for \$1,777.50. The tract was "all that part of the farm called 'Bright Helmstone' now occupied by E. Sheppard Morris." (SB 4/675; 5/9/1883)

A plat for the proposed town could not be located, and there has not been sufficient subsequent development in Golts to be able to discern a laid-out town. The probably large-scale scheme of the Kents evidently failed, though the reasons are not known. However, the town seems to have been intended to be centered around the present-day intersection of Bradford Johnson Road with Black Bottom-Cold Well Road. The town's church and school would be located at or near this intersection. Bradford Johnson Road (then called the Delaware and Sassafras Road) was to be called Front Street. (cont.)



A recently improved road network in the area probably also led to a belief in the promise of the laid-out town of Golts. The 1877 atlas map shows only one road leading to what was to become Golts--what is now called Bradford Johnson Road. It crossed the train tracks from the northwest as it does today and continued southeast to Delaware. However, the map does not show the present-day road from the Bradford Johnson Road at Golts to Cold Well Corner located to the north at the Delaware line. Nor does it show Black Bottom Road, which continues the Cold Well Corner Road southward (but changes names at Golts) to the Massey-Delaware road (or Massey-Dulaney's road). The 1884 church deed, however, refers to the Cold Well Road. It also mentions the "new road" leading into the Cold Well Road, indicating that Black Bottom Road had been built recently. After 1877 a spur from Hurlock Corner Road was built to Golts from where the road intersected the track; it parallels the track. Apparently the section of the Hurlock Corner Road that continued from the track southeast to Delaware, serving a black community en route, was essentially abandoned as an important thoroughfare. The intersection of various roads at Golts created a natural locus for a community. Today five roads intersect at Golts, creating a sort of open triangle in the center of Golts. Exactly when the Cold Well Corner Road and Black Bottom Road were built was not researched. It is likely that they post-dated the coming of the railroad. (Note: The now often-used name of Caldwell Corner for the intersection at the Delaware line of the road north from Golts with the road east from Sassafras is incorrect; according to Mrs. Reba Wharton of Golts, her grandparents reported stopping at the cold well there, where there was a pump and trough for watering horses.)

While roads were important in creating the community of Golts, the railroad was more important, making Golts a center of commerce for its section of Kent County and providing an outlet for local products. Until the coming of the railroad, the Golts area had found prosperity through farming difficult to achieve. Not only was it distant from the navigable waters of the Sassafras and Chester Rivers, but the dense forest from which the farmland had been cleared tended to close back in quickly. The soil and drainage are quite unlike those in other parts of Kent County. Although the elevations are among the highest in the county and the area is close to the watershed between the Delaware River/Bay and the rivers leading to the Chesapeake Bay, as well as on the watershed between the Chester and Sassafras Rivers, the area lacks consistent slope for runoff and water collects in many locally low sections. It was for good reason that Black Bottom Road was given its name. Even in dry periods there is dark standing water among the trees in many locations. The soil is sandy and loamy, with much decayed matter from the wet forests, but beneath the surface (varying distances) there is often a kind of low-grade iron ore that prevents percolation; it acts as a hard-pan. Even early farmers resorted to labor-intensive ditching and tiling to prevent flooded fields and be able to cultivate lands that, even when cleared, proved difficult.

Although for many years from 1835 an Eastern Shore railroad down through the Maryland counties had been discussed in the legislature, the plans were repeatedly aborted. While internal improvements languished in  
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Maryland, by 1860 a Delaware north-south road was built, making the peninsula's main line road to Philadelphia via Wilmington instead of to Baltimore via Elkton as intended by Marylanders. The Eastern Shore of Maryland seemed in danger of becoming a backwater economically. Various options were considered for Queen Anne's, Kent, and Cecil Counties--whether to proceed with a line to Elkton or to connect with the Delaware Railroad. But the Civil War intervened, and railroad plans had to wait.

In 1867 a subsidiary of the Delaware Railroad, the Townsend Branch Railroad Company, built a line from Townsend, Delaware, (on the main line) to the state line with the hope of feeder lines from Kent County. In early 1868 work was begun for Kent & Queen Anne Railroad to run to Massey's Crossroads, Millington, Sudlersville, and Centreville. Service seems to have begun the same year. By the next year construction had begun on the Kent County Railroad from Massey's through Kennedyville and Worton to Chestertown. This line was completed by 1872, though service on the previously completed portions was begun earlier.

Running southwest from Townsend to Massey's, the Townsend Branch's first station in Kent County originally was Morris Station, where the Hurlock Corner-Delaware Road intersected the railroad, about 6 mile southwest of the present-day Golts crossroads. Why the station was located there is not clear, except that here the track intersected an existing road, where a store may also have been located. The 1877 atlas map shows the station to the north of the intersection of railroad and road, adjacent to the home of a J. A. Morris, from whom the name presumably was derived. To the east of the intersection of train track and Hurlock Corner-Delaware Road was a black community, known later at least as Willow Hill. As early as 1860, and perhaps earlier, a black Methodist church was located there. (See report for K-628, Wesley Henry Church) In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries 60 or more black families were said to have lived there. This black community still survives but is much reduced, the young who grew up there having moved away in search of employment and more prosperous lives than seemed possible in the Golts area.

No one in the community now seems to know exactly why or when the station was relocated one mile to the northeast, just that it occurred. Perhaps Daniel Kent was instrumental in the change. From just a rural, farming area whose lands were not very favorable for farming, Golts seems to have grown physically until about 1900, with the surviving buildings mostly appearing to date from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. By the period 1900-1915 about 86 children attended the Golts Public School for white children. The name Golts seems to have come from the family name of a Thomas Golt, a late nineteenth-century resident, a storekeeper and perhaps an early station master who lived in a house now gone that was east of the two houses across from the church. The sign on the train station said only "Golt," but the official post office designation became Golt's Station; popular usage has shortened and corrupted the name to Golts. The station, now gone, was located in the triangle between the track and Bradford Johnson and Black Bottom Roads.

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A logging industry developed to harvest the nearby dense forests, which still endure. Portable steam-powered sawmills were taken from place to place in the woods, with the logs hauled to them by mule teams and then the products or logs taken to the railroad station. According to Mrs. Reba Wharton, whose Vansant family has long been in the area, the logging was mostly to provide railroad ties and wood for paper manufacture, as well as to provide building lumber. The ubiquitous gum trees were harvested for paper manufacturers. Oak is the other important kind of tree in the Golts area forests; the few pines now present are relatively recent. Though logging is still done in the area, as a major area industry it declined after World War I. Joseph W. Peacock seems to have been a leading logging entrepreneur, with a large warehouse (now gone) at the railroad. He is said to have had the first Reo truck made expressly or converted for hauling large logs, ca. 1912-1914. He is also said to have built the three houses just southeast of the railroad track east of the Cold Well Corner Road.

On the east side of the road to the Cold Well Corner, north of the railroad track opposite the present post office, a cannery was built some time before World War I, and local farmers converted much of their arable land to tomato production. A Mr. Preston may have been the builder and first owner, and there may have been several buildings. A Mr. Woodburn of Wilson Point later bought it. Mr. Woodburn is said to have promised to build an industrial plant at Golts if the town were renamed after him, but nothing evidently came of either the plant plan or the name change. (There was another attempt, perhaps also related to Mr. Woodburn, about 1915, to rename Golts. The name of the post office was officially changed to Deep Wood, but the railroad refused to change its station name, and numerous community residents were opposed as well, so the Golts name was restored.) The Golts cannery was one of a number of canneries that were established along the rail line. There was also a cannery in Massey and in Van Dyke's (in nearby Delaware), though the latter evidently specialized in canning peas and corn. Processing mainly tomatoes, the Golts cannery provided seasonal employment for a large number of local people. Like the other canneries, the Golts cannery sent its products north on the train. By about 1932 the cannery was gone.

By the turn of the century Golts was said to have had four or five general stores serving the considerable population in the area, from farmers to loggers to the mostly black farm laborers and logging laborers that were needed in great numbers before the age of mechanization. The one-storey frame store across Black Bottom Road from the church survives. A post office had been in Golts from soon after the arrival of the railroad, with perhaps its first location in the railroad station. There is said to have been a blacksmith shop and livery stable near the old Peacock house southeast of the school.

With the coming of Prohibition in 1919 many Golts area residents, black and white, found the combination of the nearby dense woods, the presence of the rail line, the great distance from the county seat and the sheriff, the proximity of the state line, and the availability of local grain to be conducive to the establishment of stills and bootlegging operations. Although it is true  
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that such were located in other parts of Kent County, including a notably large establishment on the Massey-Galena Road near present-day Route 301, there seems to have been a concentration in and around Golts. With Prohibition coinciding first with a post World War I agricultural depression and then with the Great Depression of 1929 and later, bootlegging provided a means to economic survival for many.

Before Prohibition, Kent County's position on liquor had been quite strait-laced. State law had given each county the right to decide on liquor sales, and Kent had voted to be dry (though neighboring Queen Anne's County was wet, allowing purchases there). However, for a short time after the repeal of Prohibition, until the Maryland legislature could act, there was little liquor regulation affecting Kent County. But Delaware quickly imposed a ban on Sunday sales, leading to traffic to Kent County on that day. With travel to Golts from Delaware really easier than from the rest of Kent County, several "beer parlors" opened in Golts and enjoyed considerable Delaware trade. They began to hire good bands and provide space for dancing, and Golts soon became renowned as a night spot, drawing people from considerable distances on weekend evenings.

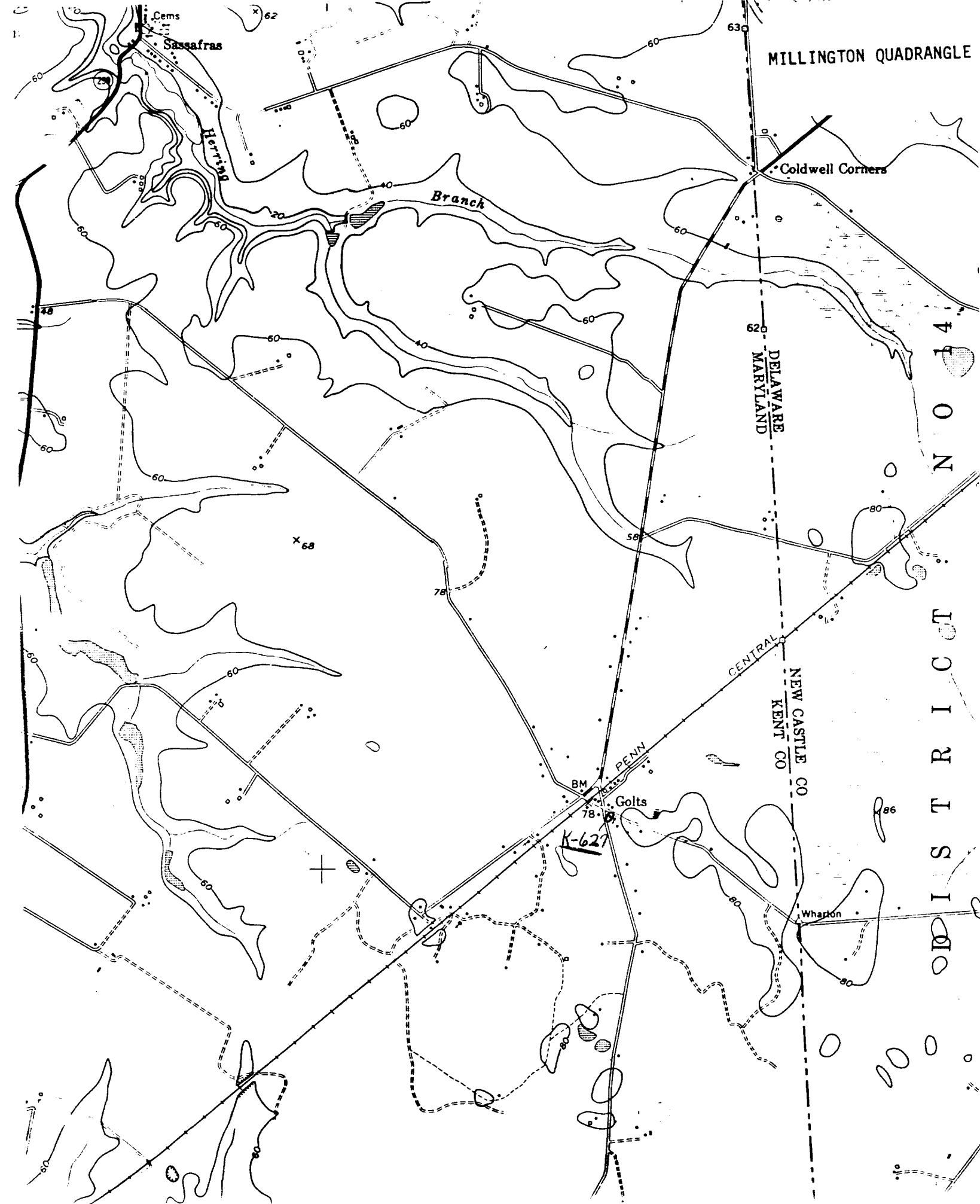
The now-unoccupied large two-storey frame building on the Bradford Johnson Road just southeast of the train track was one of the dance halls. After the late 1940s or early 1950s it became a store only. Interestingly, it is a rhombus in plan, its front and rear ends parallel to the road and its sides parallel to the train track. The second storey was said to have been for blacks, the first for whites. This building's use as a dance hall seems to have predated considerably the post-Prohibition era, having apparently been built circa 1870-1880 and early used for a dance hall, although its original purpose may have been as a cigar factory. The other large and later beer garden-dance hall is gone. It operated until about 1960 and about 1968 was burned.

For most if not all of the twentieth century there were four passenger trains daily (one in each direction on both the line to Chestertown and the line to Queen Anne's County) and several freight trains. After World War II passenger service was ended. By that time the cannery traffic was gone and the logging business had declined, and shippers along the lines were turning increasingly to trucks to transport goods. After the mail and milk contracts (which had in part supported passenger service) were lost to trucking and as travel by car became more common, the passenger trains ceased. There still are freight trains on the Townsend branch line, but service to Chestertown, at least is only once a week.

The Golts community, including the white area in the vicinity of the main crossroads around the train station, the black area to the southwest, and the white area to the southeast began to decline as a balanced community during the second quarter of the twentieth century. The school closed about 1933, with the students afterwards transported to Massey, even though there were still about 25 pupils. The church was closed as a Methodist church just before World War II, in 1939 or 1940, although Mrs. Augustus Davis opened it  
(continued)

later in the 1940s as the Gospel Church with chiefly her family in attendance. With the cannery closed, logging no longer as important, and farming increasingly mechanized, people moved elsewhere in search of employment, especially during and after World War II. The beer-garden and dance-hall era merely postponed what seemed inevitable. Today the population of Golts is far smaller than at the turn of the century, and many of its remaining residents do not work in Kent County but commute to nearby Delaware.

The area just southeast of Golts, between Black Bottom Road, Bradford Johnson Road, and the state line, once had numerous dwellings (some said to have been of log construction) and a small road network, including the southeastern end of the Hurlock Corner Road to Delaware. The houses are gone and the area grown up; the unpaved roads appear on the USGS Millington Quadrangle map, but their locations can no longer be easily determined on site.





K627-26

K-627

Golts Methodist Church

Bradford Johnson Rd., Golts

M. Q. Fallaw - 4/9/86

View to southwest





K-627

Golts Methodist Church

Bradford Johnson Rd., Golts

M. Q. Fallaw - 4/9/86

View to northeast